

IT Workforce Committee Meeting Minutes  
October 16, 2001  
1:00 a.m.

Minutes from last meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Action Items from meeting of September 18, 2001, were reviewed.

1. Expert committee is Ray Watley of DMV, Ken Adams from DoIt, and Chuck Moltz from the Attorney General's Office. These are all people that are supervising the CNS III's. We met last week and will meet again this week. Moving along.
2. Also on the agenda is discussion of salary issues concerning IT that might need to be addressed by 2003. Assigned to all Committee members.
3. Class series for Agency Program Information Specialist addresses the employee that falls between Management Analyst and IT. There is no specific classification that addresses their responsibilities. Discussion will be on small revisions that this Committee can make for this series to more closely fit their duties.

Training:

A Gardner analyst will be discussing centralized training from a survey compiled from eight states regarding their training issues. This discussion will be conducted via conference call on October 18, 2001, at 12:00 p.m., to which all Committee members are welcome to dial, (800) 822-6507, ID # 1258455.

Good discussion on centralized training was generated from the last Gardner conference call. Data was being compiled from questions posed to them from the IT Workforce Committee and will be addressed in the conference call on 10/18/01.

There is a 20-25-page report on centralized training on the Internet. The return on investment speaks highly to DoIT. It eliminates travel, training can be taken at leisure, and on-line support is available. All the departments should take a hard look at.

There has been discussion about having a training officer, a full time position that would coordinate training for the different IT shops.

The negatives: No classroom discussion; feedback from different levels of experience. The pluses outweigh considerably.

Best Consulting has given a briefing of their courses on classes of 12 participants or more, in town. They have a new three-month schedule for January, February, and March. There are CD's and pamphlets available on Visual Basic and Crystal Reports. There are various other courses in the IT area. They want a minimum of 12 participants. If there is fallout from the class, they will allow us to fill in and get the break on the prices. They have conducted classes with county, city, state, and private entities attending, and have been able to handle the separate billings. They are very cooperative and looking for business. Now is the time to negotiate good prices.

Visual Basic training from the Community College has been considered for 12-20 people for a week was \$2,600 for the whole class, not per person.

That is better than the quotes from Best Consulting.

The Governor has called a halt to the One-Shot training program until the economy is more secure. Until the money is available, no commitments can be made.

The proposal has been put on hold with Best Consulting as this has been explained to them. The next 30-45 days should present a clearer situation. Best is organizing a schedule for January, February, and March. People are not traveling, IT dollars have been cut back has forced them to rethink their schedules.

It is unknown whether a request for proposal is required. It may depend on the class. The training may be under the threshold for the requirement. Best is very flexible. The training in Crystal Reports for six people conducted in May was highly productive. It was a five-day course covering three different portions of Crystal Reports, starting from the beginning and progressing through advanced topics. Senior programmers were sent to it.

Discussion on this topic from the last IT Workforce Committee meeting proposed billing one department that could then bill the individual attendees. Best Consulting can either bill the agencies direct or they can bill one entity that can bill the individual agencies.

At DoIT, there is the ability to centralize the coordination and billing.

One of the problems of training for multi-agencies is trying to coordinate a date with 12 participants. If one participant drops out, a replacement must be found because it affects the price per individual per agency. Gardner is willing to come here. We have 3-4 training sites in Carson City that could be utilized with proper notification and lead-time.

Computer Horizons is another contact made for training, but the only information available is their catalog. They have not provided a schedule or list of instructors.

There are several on-line companies out there. They all do about the same thing and prices are very competitive. One company from the East was tried, but there was a very small window of five months for the courses and the schedule. Their price was \$65 per person and any course could be taken. The reduced rates were due to the fact that their new price structure and schedule was coming out within five months. Without the longer time period, the desired utilization was not achieved. The overall price was under the \$5,000 requirement for Board approval.

Several programmers were allowed to sign up for the course. They were given the in-house flexibility of training on their own time or we allowed approximately 100 hours to train during work hours. It is better than sending an employee away because having them at the workplace

they are still available for priority/maintenance work. That is one of the advantages of providing on-line training.

There are some on-line training courses for Excel, Word, Access, and some Visual Basic currently being utilized through the intranet in the State. It is working fairly well and while participant availability in-house for maintenance or emergency deployment may be an asset for the agency, it is detrimental to the individual. They become susceptible to interruption making it hard for them to focus. Because the in-house training can be done anytime, its priority is low. Therefore, the justification for interruption is high. The best results are achieved when the managers set aside regular duties for a day or so to allow the employees to focus on the training.

The request was made for other agencies involved in the IT Workforce Committee to provide staff to transcribe Committee meeting minutes on a rotating basis. Please e-mail Rossalyn Hoid with availability. Otherwise, she will be e-mailing people on the Committee.

Discussion is needed on guidelines for permitting individual agencies to set up and maintain separate IT shops. Unity and Taxation are currently trying a decentralization pilot. There are many requests received from agencies that have one or two people with IT expertise and they would like to have their own IT shop. There should be some parameters around this that would help us offer guidelines; what is involved in opening a separate IT shop. This Committee is interested in your thoughts, especially those of you who have your own IT shops.

One idea for agencies who approach with this type of request is for the agency to staff for a normal IT workload, but when there are peaks, the agency would require additional help supplied from DoIT. There has been interest on combinations of approaches. In the NPD19 review meetings there have been examples of the kind of requests that have come DoIT's way. A PC Tech may be needed, or a programmer, or a systems administrator. When there has not been a technical manager to help guide the technical staff, the end result is not always as desired. Guidelines would help to address the issues that arise from maintaining separate staff.

For instance, should there be a minimum number of people required to maintain a separate shop? Should there always be a requirement that you must have a technical supervisor to take the lead, someone who would do the interviewing, the hiring, writing of performance evaluations, the work performance standards. There are sometimes problems when technical people report to non-technical people. Should there be a required agency size? Should there be a specific kind of support needed? Training would need to be included. Many times when people are in an agency that is not a technical shop, those people don't always get the training they need. This should open discussion in this area.

When an IT shop is opened, adding more people is necessary. Every agency that is going to open a shop is going to need to add more people. It is never cheaper to open an in-house shop. When an agency runs into a crunch, they need to have some place to go for help. There are a lot of things required for set up. The justification for adding staff to handle the crunch has to be weighed along with the other things that a non-technical manager doesn't deal with on a day-to-day basis. DoIT knows what those things are but the agencies don't. A backlog of data may indicate a need. DoIT isn't exactly equipped to handle backlog. The agency has to go

somewhere to solve the problem. Consultants are often where they go. They need to have some guidance to understand the ramifications and the costs.

It might be more expedient to open an IT shop in an agency, but it is often more costly as well. All of the aspects must be understood.

It is like splitting an agency. Duplication of processes always occurs. Staff is always added to handle those duplicate processes. There are never enough. That force must be reckoned with when going to the Legislature for approval.

Project management would be a key area of need when evaluating the pros and cons.

Many agencies feel they can start with just a few positions. There is a problem keeping the growth in check. Once one need is addressed, there are more needs that require more staffing. The perceived need grows and so does the number of staff. There is a big cost factor involved.

The scope of what an agency does needs to be kept in focus. Sizing needs to be considered to fit the need. At what size does a formal IT structure become required. A smaller scope may require only an IT lead to advise. Larger needs probably require a larger team. The threshold needs to be established.

That threshold has not been established. Currently when an agency does not have IT support and it wants positions, we add staff on the DoIT side and support them and bill them. What they would like instead is for those positions to reside in their departments with their departmental control. The struggle is to determine the thresholds and what makes sense. If there is just one person in need, there is not enough need to qualify for an IT shop. What needs to be addressed is what does qualify. At what point does an agency have enough people to classify as a shop. Once having reached a certain level, there are now other needs. Perhaps having reached that certain level, the agency would participate with the IT Workforce Committee or the NPD19 review, or other higher-level technical activities. That has yet to be established.

There is an advantage to DoIT to establish individual IT shops. DoIT does not have to keep going back to the Legislature and asking for more people. It would distribute the responsibility for Legislative approval across various state agencies. The distribution would disperse the dispersion of funds from DoIT's funding to a variety of other budgets. The individual requests at smaller amounts might win more consideration than one large sum for a variety of purposes and entities.

There is also the advantage of a quicker response to need in an individual shop from their own people from their own shop.

The state has gone back and forth between centralized and de-centralized data processing. There is a happy medium in between. The main frames are not going away. They will continue to be utilized as data repositories. The client/server can serve some agencies efficiently because they can respond to their needs more quickly than DoIT. That should be the target. To allow the

individual agency to do what they need to do without getting carried away and to take the pressure off of DoIT.

There is an advantage of having that technical person assigned to an individual agency in that that person understands the business of the agency.

A problem that will continue to plague DoIT is that Nevada is growing very rapidly. All of the agencies are going to grow. DoIT can't grow that rapidly. Those other agencies need to do something to supplement their needs. DoIT can never grow to be able to handle the whole state.

There are some agencies that could benefit and function well if they had basic PC support. To set the guidelines will depend on the realm and scope of what the agency does. When the wants get into in-house databases and applications, then the IT managers should be mandatory. DoIT could supply technical personnel to all of the locations in the state and manage PC's to provide the basics. This might alleviate the wait factor to the Help Desk.

Separate areas of PC support and development have now been identified. The relationships that can be established with the smaller agencies might act as pilot programs. Administrators of the bigger agencies may be very resistant for someone else to take over their responsibilities. They don't want to pay the DoIT charges.

This issue is not about going in to any existing shops. DoIT receives requests from agencies that want their own IT positions. For those agencies that are not exempt, DoIT must sign the authorization. Each case is evaluated individually as to what the need is. The concern is with the increase in requests for DBA's from large agencies with no technical expertise. The red flags go up that the request may not exactly fit the need. The issues need to be examined to see what the real need is.

Another concern is with similar requests for programmers, particularly requests for 1 or 2 programmers. There is nothing set up for those isolated individuals to interact with other programmers in the state. Only the PC support group gets together on a statewide agency basis. Will DoIT be called upon to provide extra help and discover a unique, non-standard system that no one can support? Many times these situations become very political. Fairness becomes a critical concern when determining which agencies should run their own shops and which should not.

General guidelines that make sense resulting from consensus from the IT community are what this Committee should be striving toward.

Previous guidelines have specified x number of people to do certain things. That has become passé. The specifications should not have hard numbers written in. That may hinder the flexibility to address individual needs.

These requests are coming from current DoIT customers. In essence, the fact that their needs are not being met in the support that the need, DoIT is failing these customers. There are two very distinct areas where the need for more support has been identified; Network support, and

application support. If DoIT is not supplying the support needed, the agencies are just going out to a different vendor. DoIT is a vendor. A contractor is a vendor. In these cases, a situation often arises where a manager without technical expertise is put in the position of trying to choose a technical package. They need assistance. If they are about to engage in a project, they need the assistance of a project manager.

If there were need for a development shop within an agency, it would be pointless to have less than a team necessary to address the need. From the aspect of continuity, there can't be just one person addressing the needs of all of the users of the product.

To appropriately explain the concept necessary to the needs of the requesting agencies, a business/process analyst, program information specialist may be required. An individual who can succinctly communicate/liaison to DoIT or any other contractor is needed to facilitate what needs to be done. At the business process level a database manager could easily be the individual who directs the design. This individual would be totally versed in the business process.

The Information System Specialist (ISS) classification series would be necessary if an IT shop exists in the agency. If there is no existing shop, then the Management series might be more appropriate. The duties obviously overlap.

Taxation is the newest shop. It is a four-person development shop that has an ISS IV lead. There are no PC technicians. DoIT provides their PC technical support. They already had two agency information specialists. Four transferred over to Taxation from DoIT, and they already had a manager. Their structure consists of seven people.

Unity now has 12 programmers one of which is an ISS IV. The network staff stayed with DoIT. This demonstrates that not one size fits all. Earlier discussion was about the problems arising from functional social workers supervising technical staff. The reverse is true too; having a technical manager trying to work with social worker would have been very difficult. Now that Unity is operational, the transition is more to the IT side. There are also enhancements where the need the business analysts to work with the functional staff. There does need to be some subjectivity. Just assigning a number would not be conducive to being flexible.

An inquiry to the Help Desk would be required to determine what is the most requested type of support of DoIT. When requests come to DoIT for IT positions, many are PC support, network support, some times it is the system analyst, the DBA's, sometimes they want someone to coordinate their IT issues, sometimes it is programming. There are a variety of needs. In the past when the request is for an IT position and there is no existing IT shop, those have been DoIT positions. Many of these agencies have later requested that these positions within their own agencies and be able to direct the work. These requests must go to the DoIT director.

The trend appears to look at the individual case and evaluate each one separately. There may need to be some kind of specific breakdown such as a request for database developers also requires the use of a server, development software, operating systems, and PC support with replacement and upgrade equipment, testing software. Initial costs could be determined for a

basic scenario and presented to the requesting agency to give them an idea of what a system might cost. Right now it appears that many agencies have this concept that they can request their own PC technician and start repairing their own equipment. The costs escalate dramatically and they are not usually aware of that fact at the outset.

There are already these kinds of situations occurring within divisions of agencies who have their own shops but limited programming staff. The division will go outside of the agency to have their needs addressed or build their own applications. When catastrophe occurs, they turn to the agency IT shop for help in restoring order to systems over which IT has no control. The idea was to help themselves, but in the long run they are hurt, especially when it is mission critical data that is inaccessible.

If a group could be formed for isolated programmers, similar to the TEAM group, to network and share expertise and resources with their counterparts within state government, it might alleviate the crisis situation where data and efficiency might be lost. The span of potential subjects in the TEAM group is much more confined than in application development. So for a group of developers or program analysts to meet, there would be much less chance for intercept than for the PC TEAM group.

With the wide distribution of PC's on to the desks of state agencies, comes the wide variety of problems that individual users can't handle. They then turn to their IT specialists for help. IT is now putting twice as much effort into fixing things than they are in development correctly at the onset. The limits imposed upon the agencies help, but don't stop development outside of the standards. As the technology expands, so does the problem.

These issues are currently being handled on a case-by-case basis, talking with people, trying to find out what they need, trying to determine how we can continue to help them out, and perhaps offer some guidance as we are going through this. One thing being asked is if there is to be a technical person and there are no other technical staff, that DoIT is present to help interview to verify the qualifications of the applicants.

The NPD19 Review Committee meetings recently have turned up management/analyst positions with some IT responsibilities and there is no clear identification for their classification. Definition depends upon how much IT activity they perform versus how much management analyst activity to determine if they belong in an IT classification or not. It was brought to the Committee's attention at the last meeting that the agency program/information specialist might be a good position to use for those that are a cross between IT and management/analyst.

When looking at the detailed knowledge that the agency program/information specialist requires, the program area, the career path for any individual in that position. It may be more practical to broadening the ISS positions as opposed putting in the agency program/information specialist position just because of its limitations.

For some situations the agency program/information specialist is perfect. There are staff that are management/analysts who perform IT activities for the agency. They have acquired the expertise from experience, on-the-job training, and a few courses they have been sent to by their

agency. They have developed well, but the problem was in recognizing their expertise. This position, with some modification, would be a better fit to provide a broader range of opportunities.

In the agencies without a formal IT shop, there are staff who are performing IT duties who would never qualify for the entry level on the technical side. But because constant development is required to meet federal requirements, the staff in these positions is doing a lot of business analysis on the other side of the position.

They may be misclassified. There is a study going on to determine if that is true and it might address the issues that DoIT faces in trying to classify positions. From the description of the study which is based upon the specific knowledge of the social welfare programs, and is also heavily involved in the development and implementation of major programs and systems which is an IT component, whatever may be developed might be applicable to other agencies as a basis for analysis.

The agency program/information specialist classification has been developed for quite some time, but many agencies have chosen not to use it. They prefer to use the management/analyst so they can change assignments and off-load analytical studies and other kinds of research projects; what ever needs to be done. There is nothing wrong with the agency program/information specialist; it is just that agencies are not using it. So that may mean that the management/analyst is a more flexible classification series depending upon what is needed. It is a much broader class.

It may be better to reduce the number of classifications and to make them broader in their scope than to limit potential career paths for employees with more, but narrower classifications that can be used in a broader variety of situations. Limiting career movement in data processing is the dilemma DoIT is faced with now. There are cases where management/analysts moved into ISS positions and then on up the ladder of advancement.

It is harder to move staff out of agency specific positions because their area of expertise is environmental and doesn't apply to other agencies.

What would it take to enlarge the management/analyst series to enable it to do what the agency program/information specialist can do? It starts a little bit lower. It is possible to get some pretty good business analyst people, and grade 33 or 34 is not necessary. If written differently, the management/analyst classification could include the agency program/information specialist within it. There are probably many management/analysts who are performing exactly what is in the agency program/information specialist specification. They are business process analysts.

That could be a good classification for DoIT to use in filling requests for staff that can fill their needs instead of trying to fit into the ISS series. There is no series that runs below the grade 33 management/analyst series. The management/analyst series does not adequately cover IT where personnel are responsible for a program in IT. That is the problem. But maybe the track of re-writing to include the agency program/information specialist aspects into the management/analyst series is better than limiting flexibility of career path. Developing the



management/analyst to include IT responsibilities could possibly offer the ability to transition into the ISS series.

If an agency has its own IT shop, the need for IT responsibilities in the management/analyst series would not be necessary. NOMADS may have already gone through this evolution. There were positions needed in the implementation process to review reports and review information processing. Now that they are operational they don't know what to do with the management/analysts. They had been eligibility certification specialists. Now they are out of the classification and their project is basically over. It is unknown if that problem has been solved.

Since it is not an option to create a whole new series to address the need, it is necessary to determine other avenues. A common practice is to take the classification that best fits a need and add a paragraph that states, "In addition, this position requires..." and the verbiage for the requirements is added. It then fits those employees with the specialized knowledge or experience needed.

Salary issues:

Unless salary structures are changed it is difficult to raise lower level salaries because they bump into the bottom of the higher levels. The higher levels will not experience the transition of personnel that the lower levels will and will not require adjustment. To adjust salaries to retain expertise in IT the problem emerges when the lower salaries are raised. The margin between the upper and lower levels becomes so small that the lower levels have nowhere to go, so they leave. The upper levels are not leaving. The top-level staff is probably not here for the money. They could go out to private industry and make more money, but they aren't leaving.

There must be other ways to reward staff for doing a good job. Training could be another incentive to keep people from leaving, but those dollars are limited. The trend may need to be focused on going to the Legislature and requesting five percent of our budgets to maintain a training level for our people. There are reward luncheons and plaques and non-salary incentives that can and are being used, although the cost is largely our own.

In the ISS IV position, there are 29 positions; Nevada IT experienced a 31% rate of turnover in FY2001. For the 75 ISS III positions, there is an almost 15% rate of turnover, and for the 71 ISS II positions, there is almost 27% turnover. At the same time the survey shows that the salaries for the ISS II's lagged 16%. The ISS II's can move up to a III or a IV, but we have still lost people. We may want to submit some proposals in the next biennium to the Legislature that represent the IT shops.

Nevada DoIT has the luxury of having a centralized shop. If it becomes decentralized, expenses will be increased. The increases aren't as visible in the decentralized shop. Arizona has tried to come back to a centralized operation because decentralized doesn't work. Oracle realized tremendous savings by centralizing. Success like that has to make the State of Nevada look seriously at the centralized/decentralized issues. There is a happy medium that Nevada may be able to locate. So far we have not been able to get to that point because whoever is in control

goes one way or the other. We need to look at the medium possibility to be able to work on these things. Yes it going to cost more money.

There will always be a backlog. The more that is accomplished, the more is wanted. The way technology is going, it is impossible to keep up. The issues go way beyond costs. If the product delivered to the agency is what they need, if it is what they expected, if it is what they wanted, even if it costs twice as much, it is worth ten times as much to them.

Take Taxation as an example. Being decentralized may not be such a good thing. Obviously there must have been a very big reason it was allowed. They must know that it is going to cost them more. They will probably say at this point that it is worth every penny and more. They made a big case to have their own shop and it made sense with Unity. It needed to be tried, because it was unknown if it would work or not. It couldn't be turned down with a flat no without being tried.

The jury is in on Oracle saving money by centralizing. The jury is still out as to whether the practice is working right. It is still the customer, our consumer who is driving this. They are smarter. They want their service over night instead of three days. They want web page access.

Good discussion.

This Committee clearly has the charter to request things that go beyond what Department of Personnel can do within a biennium or two biennium. If issues have to go before the legislature, then so be it. If the brainstorming is limited to only what will fit within the Department of Personnel's abilities, then this Committee is not doing its job. That is all the more reason to come up with something for the next biennium. We need information from Personnel as to how much it would cost to have a classification or occupational study done. Should the Committee collectively put in that request to get the funds to be able to make it happen?

There is a 10-year schedule when these requests are routinely submitted. This Committee could perhaps put money in the budget and get a consultant to work for personnel to conduct a study for us. It could be the same for the training. If the request for additions to our budgets for training is consistent among the IT shops, then the Legislators are told the same thing, that the need isn't specific to an agency, the need is for what ever it takes.

Some issues can go to the Governor's Oversight Committee to take to the Legislature from this group.

Any items for the agenda are welcome for inclusion. Please e-mail them to Rossalyn Hoid at DoIT Personnel.

The IT Workforce Committee attendees roster will have a column for agency added to help in identifying members of the Committee.

Rossalyn Hoid of DoIT Personnel has compiled a list of training providers and will distribute by e-mail to all Committee members.